

EPA Statement on WV Spill Response
Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin
2/5/14

First, I want to assure you that EPA is on the job. We have been on the job since day one. On January 9th, we were informed of the spill and made the quick decision to take a number of actions, including deploying two of our On-Scene Coordinators the very next day to be here in Charleston on the ground and working to support the State, West Virginia American Water Company and other responding agencies.

EPA's job from day one has been to support the State of West Virginia, who has the lead and still has the lead for this response. In addition to deploying our On-Scene Coordinators, we assigned EPA personnel during that first weekend to work at the FEMA response center in Philadelphia on a 24-hour basis to gain round-the-clock information as the situation evolved. Also, EPA's drinking water experts worked closely with other Federal and State agencies in West Virginia as they developed their plan for getting the drinking water system back on-line.

Our role as a support agency has been steadfast and strong, and the State has communicated with us throughout this response.

In cases of emergency response, federal agencies have a protocol we follow so that there is an orderly and effective approach to the response and communications. In many cases, federal agencies are there to support State and local

response efforts. That is the situation here. FEMA had the overall lead for federal response activities for this incident, and EPA cooperated closely with them. This approach governed the early weeks of the response. But as noted, the State of West Virginia has had the overall lead, and federal agencies offered assistance daily on many technical and programmatic aspects.

EPA can confirm today that the spill site is stabilized. Work is underway to empty and dismantle all of the tanks. West Virginia American Water Company's sampling results remain at non-detect or low parts per billion levels – in other words at orders of magnitude below the health risk levels recommended by the CDC for MCHM and PPH.

EPA remains committed to supporting the State as necessary to complete the cleanup of the spill site, and to ensure appropriate actions are taken to protect people's health.